

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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FOLLOWING REPEAT PRAGUE 1079 SENT ACTION SECSTATE USIA 28
APR 77

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRAGUE 1079

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: NA

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA TREATMENT OF U.S.

USIA FOR IEU

SUMMARY: REPORTS THAT CZECH TELEVISION WILL CARRY DOCUMENTARY
WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS ON ESPIONAGE ROLE OF AMERICAN EMBASSY
IN PRAGUE; RECENT RADIO BROADCAST ACCUSING FORMER PUBLIC
AFFAIRS OFFICER, ROBERT WARNER, OF ESPIONAGE; AND TV AND RUDE
PRAVO REPORTING ON AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER FROM
CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZEN IMPLOING RETURN OF CHILDREN NOW LIVING IN
U.S., INDICATE NEGATIVE ORIENTATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK COVERAGE
CONTINUES UNABATED, AND THIS TREND OVERSHADOWS OTHER CURRENT
MEDIA REPORTAGE WITH MORE POSITIVE COVERAGE OF SOME
ASPECTS OF U.S. SOCIETY.

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1. AN EMPLOYEE OF CZECHOSLOVAK RADIO TOLD PAO APRIL 15 THAT
"SHORTLY BEFORE MAY 1" CZECHOSLOVAK TV WILL CARRY A DOCUMENTARY
FILM PREPARED BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ON THE "ESPIONAGE
ROLE" OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN PRAGUE DURING THE LATE 1960S.
THE INFORMATION IS UNCONFIRMED AND SECOND-HAND, BUT SUCH A
PROGRAM WOULD BE A FOLLOW-ON OF EARLIER FILMS TRYING TO LINK
THE BRITISH AND CANADIAN EMBASSIES WITH ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES.

THESE FILMS WERE HAM-HANDED AFFAIRS, USING OLD STOCK FOOTAGE OF EMBASSY BUILDING, FAKE INTERIOR SHOTS WITH BRITISH DIPLOMAT AND CZECH CONTACTS WHISPERING WITH ONE ANOTHER WHILE DRINKING WHISKEY, ETC.

2. RADIO PROGRAM, CARRIED APRIL 9, FOR TEN MINUTES ON PRAGUE STATION, ATTEMPTED TO LINK FORMER PAO ROBERT WARNER (1965-68) WITH GATHERING OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION ON SUSTAINED BASIS FROM NOW-JAILED YOUTH IN CESKE BUDEJOVICE. SCRIPT WAS COMPLETE WITH HEAVILY BREATHED WHISPERS AND EDGAR ALLAN POE SOUND EFFECTS. ALSO SAID WARNER KNEW AND RECEIVED INFORMATION ON CP OFFICIALS FROM VACLAV HAVEL, CZECH WRITER WHO IS AWAITING TRIAL IN CONNECTION WITH CHARTER 77 ACTIVITIES.

3. RUDE PRAVO OF APRIL 26 FRONT-PAGED THE TEXT OF OPEN LETTER FROM CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZEN VLASTA GABRIELOVA-ZLUDKYNNOVA OF DECIN TO PRESIDENT CARTER, IN WHICH SHE REQUESTS HIS ASSISTANCE IN SECURING THE RETURN OF HER TWO CHILDREN TAKEN BY HER HUSBAND TO THE U.S. WHEN HE EMIGRATED IN 1968. LETTER, BACKGROUND COMMENTARY, AND TELEVISION NEWS SPOTS TO DATE HAVE BEEN MODERATE IN TONE, BUT THIS CASE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PROMINENT MEDIA ATTENTION. (SEE PRAGUE 1075).

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME RECENT COVERAGE OF U.S. HAS BEEN MORE POSITIVE. ONE-HOUR TV SEGMENT FROM BENNY GOODMAN'S PERFORMANCE AT PRAGUE JAZZ FESTIVAL FORMED A SATURDAY NIGHT PROGRAM APRIL 23, AND APRIL 18 AND APRIL 25 TV BROADCAST LARGELY POSITIVE SEGMENTS OF FILM ON AMERICANS OF CZECHOSLOVAK DESCENT LIVING IN TEXAS. THE TWO SEGMENTS SHOWN THUS FAR TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON THEMES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND SLAVERY RESPECTIVELY, BUT BULK OF CONTENT DEALT WITH EFFORTS OF U.S. CITIZENS OF CZECHOSLOVAK DESCENT TO MAINTAIN THEIR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN U.S. AND REFLECTED CONTINUING PRIDE IN NATIONAL "ROOTS." THIRD SEGMENT TO BE BROADCAST NEXT WEEK.

5. COMMENT: IF THE PROGRAM ACCUSING THE U.S. OF ESPIONAGE TAKES PLACE AS DESCRIBED TO US, IT WOULD REPRESENT A HIGH POINT IN LOCAL MEDIA ATTACKS ON THE U.S. --ESPECIALLY AGAINST THE EMBASSY--SINCE THE ADVENT OF CHARTER 77 AND THE INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS A MAJOR THEME IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THIS AND THE RADIO PIECE ON WARNER APPEAR TO HAVE AS A PRINCIPAL GOAL THE DISCOURAGING OF CZECHS FROM CONTACTS WITH WESTERN EMBASSIES AND VICE VERSA, WHILE THE ATTENTION GIVEN THE OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER COULD SIGNAL A NEW CZECHOSLOVAK COUNTER-OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE U.S. ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. ADDING FUEL TO THE FLAMES ON THE LOCAL IDEOLOGICAL FRONT MAY BE CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S READINESS TO RESPOND ENERGETICALLY TO CPSU CC SECRETARY ZIMYANIN'S CALL FOR A STEPPED UP PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE BY "SOCIALIST"

COUNTRIES AGAINST THE "PHARISAIC CONCERN OF THE IMPERIALISTS FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS." (MOSCOW 5545).
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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